

GST battle not over yet

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imposed in January, 1991. Natives must now pay the GST on all goods and services purchased outside the reserve community unless it is delivered onto the reserve.

"I guess what we were looking for were statements by the major political groups to lend some encouragement to our people who are fighting this infringement on the aboriginal rights," said McCormick. "We want them to know they're not out there all by themselves."

McCormick and his colleagues have amassed letters of support from about 20 or so prominent Canadians, including Liberal MP Ethel Blondin, who was present at Thursday's meeting, Senator Len Marchand, Elijah Harper, C.A.W. President Bob White, and Jean Chretien, among others.

And although support has been forthcoming, it may be a case of

too little too late for some retailers. Bonnie Bressette, a restaurant owner from the Kettle Point First Nations said she had already had a commital warrant issued on her for failure to collect GST from her non-Native customers. She said it was costly for individuals to fight the government and now they were threatening to revoke her vendors permit.

"I believe in my aboriginal rights and in my community as a sovereign nation, and I'm not obligated to collect tax on behalf of any other government," she said.

Still she wondered if there was any organization retailers could turn to for support.

McCormick said the Assembly of First Nations has passed a resolution to offer support to individuals but conceded the final solution may lie in getting either one of the opposition parties already

committed to repealing the tax for Natives elected in the next federal election.